

very mistake for which it eviscerated the Clinton regime: running roughshod over legitimate concerns of Western communities and putting the federal treasury at risk.

A decade ago, during the reign of George H.W. Bush, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management tried to revamp environmental rules and financial accountability standards for hard-rock mines operating on public property. But the effort got sidelined while Congress debated major changes to the underlying federal statute. After the congressional push fizzled in 1997, then-U.S. Interior Secretary Bruce Babbitt started a formal process to modernize the mining rules.

The old regulations were written in 1980, just before technological changes revolutionized the modern mining business. The old rules simply didn't reflect the new realities—to leave them in place would be akin to regulating jet airliners based on the concept of horse-drawn wagons.

The tough administrative process took four years, generated 550 pages of public comments and survived several congressional attempts to scuttle the effort. So while the rules took effect just before President Clinton left office, they'd been in the works for years and had been thoroughly and publicly discussed.

Despite the hyperbolic complaints leveled by partisan critics, the new regulations won't prevent mining on public lands. Instead, they just fixed glaring problems.

For decades, the BLM said it couldn't block any mining operation on public land, even if the mine would cause social or environmental harm. Near Yarnell, Ariz., for instance, a proposed mine would have opened within 500 feet of the town. People would have had to evacuate their homes during blasting, and would have suffered from mine dust, noise and other problems. Yet under the 1980 rules, BLM couldn't either stop it or do anything to help.

Moreover, the old rules left taxpayers liable for cleaning up environmental messes. The poster child for all mining fiascos is Summitville in southwestern Colorado, where in the early 1990s poisons from a bankrupt mine devastated the Rio Grande's high altitude headwaters. But other states have suffered, too. Nevada alone has 36 bankrupt mine sites—all recent, modern operations—where taxpayers have been left footing the environmental clean up bill. By contrast, the Clinton-era rules require mines to put up adequate bonds, so if the companies go bankrupt, taxpayers aren't stuck with the tab.

Yet the Bush administration's announcement Tuesday indicates that the BLM may retreat to the old way of doing business. It's hypocritical for the Bush team to pretend it can provide more thought and public input on the matter in just a 45-day comment period than the issue received during four years of intense administrative and congressional debate.

TRIBUTE TO STATE COMMANDER RONALD L. AMEND

HON. JAMES A. BARCIA

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2001

Mr. BARCIA. I wish today, Mr. Speaker, to pay tribute to State Commander Ronald L. Amend, for his many years of devoted service to his country in the United States Air Force and as a leader of the Veterans of Foreign Wars, Department of Michigan.

As a life member of VFW Post 7486 in Fairgrove, Michigan, Ron has worked on be-

half of veterans and their families since he first joined the organization after tours of duty with the Air Force in Vietnam and assignment at Fairchild Air Force Base near Spokane, Washington. His focused attention to duty and lead-by-example approach has provided greatly needed assistance to veterans throughout the state and helped to ensure that their sacrifices on and off the field of battle are honored by all citizens.

Ron has always given a full measure of his time and talents in all his undertakings. He has earned a reputation for turning difficult missions into successful endeavors wherever he has gone. As an Air Force enlisted man, as a veterans' advocate, as a father and husband, as a 29-year employee of Delphi Saginaw Steering Systems and as a long-time resident of Reese, Michigan, Ron has used his great skills to benefit others. While he has earned many awards and decorations during his military service and with the Veterans of Foreign Wars organization, Ron has always done his job without seeking glory or personal gain. His work stands as a model for all citizens now and in the future.

Indeed, Ron's colleagues in the Veterans of Foreign Wars have long been aware of his significant contributions. He has held many positions with the organization, including Post Commander and becoming an All-American District Commander.

Like many success stories, Ron's many achievements have been the product of his own hard work coupled with the loving support of his wife of 27 years, Sandi, and his children, Ross and Kari. Ron is quick to recognize that he could never have accomplished all that he has done without their help.

I ask my colleagues to join me in expressing gratitude to State Commander Ronald L. Amend for his outstanding service and wish him continued success in safeguarding the future and attending to the needs of fellow veterans everywhere.

CELEBRATING GREEK INDEPENDENCE DAY

SPEECH OF

HON. MIKE MCINTYRE

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, March 20, 2001

Mr. MCINTYRE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the nation of Greece and recognize Americans of Greek descent in celebration of Greek Independence Day. Their spirit and determination throughout history has been an inspiration to us all.

Throughout nearly four hundred years of Ottoman oppression, the Greeks maintained a unique cultural heritage. Toward the end of the Turkish occupation, this rich heritage instilled a new sense of nationalism in the Greek people. The ancient Greek ideal of freedom influenced them as well, and on March 25, 1821, they began a revolution that would eventually result in their liberty. This new independence was a victory not only for the Greeks but also for democracy.

The history and culture of the Greeks have had a profound influence on the United States. The democratic values of the ancient Greeks encouraged our own revolution and inspired the development of our government. More re-

cently, Greece has been a dependable ally, providing its support and friendship. In addition, Greek Americans continually benefit this nation, blessing us with their strong work ethic and distinctive culture.

My fellow colleagues, please join me in congratulating Greece and its people on one hundred eighty years of independence.

VETERANS NATIONAL CEMETERY IN NORTH FLORIDA

HON. CLIFF STEARNS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2001

Mr. STEARNS. Mr. Speaker, Florida's veterans population is the largest in the nation second only to California.

When I introduced legislation in the 104th to designate 1,500 acres of Cecil Field for a veterans cemetery, the veteran populations of the Florida and Georgia counties was 314,180. Today, that number is 451,127. The Florida Department of Veterans Affairs and the Georgia Department of Veterans Affairs provided this information. That represents a sizeable increase in the number of veterans living in this area. So, in just five or six years we have about 137,000 more veterans living in this region.

These statistics bear out the fact that there is a definite need for an additional cemetery to serve the northeast section of Florida and southern Georgia.

The nearest "open" VA cemetery serving the northeast Florida and southern Georgia veteran community catchment area is located in Bushnell, Florida, which is a three-hour drive from Jacksonville. An existing national cemetery in St. Augustine is full. The next closest in proximity is to be found in Marietta, Georgia just north of Atlanta.

I hope my colleagues, especially my fellow Floridians, will join me and Representative ANDER CRENSHAW in our efforts to get a national cemetery in the Jacksonville metropolitan area.

PRINTING REVISED UPDATED VERSION OF "BLACK AMERICANS IN CONGRESS, 1870-1989"

SPEECH OF

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, March 21, 2001

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Con. Res. 43. This legislation would support the authorization and printing of a revised and updated version of the House document "Black Americans in Congress."

This document delivers an abundance of information on the accomplishments of African Americans who served as members of Congress from 1870-1989 as well as updates the current status of African Americans in Congress. It highlights African American involvement in politics during historic periods such as the Reconstruction Era and the fight for civil rights during the Civil Rights Movement.

"Black Americans in Congress" is important because it explains how over the past 12

years there have been African American members of Congress who have compelling stories that should be told. There are African American members of Congress that are lawyers, doctors, teachers, librarians and farmers, all of whom have very distinguished backgrounds whose lives are worth noting and should be embraced by the U.S. House of Representatives.

I support the revision of this document because it is a dynamic tool in building a path of knowledge respecting the struggles, victories and losses of black politicians throughout America's history. This resolution will continue to document African American representation in Washington and will assist African Americans in becoming more informed about and more active in national politics.

Mr. Speaker, I urge that the House document, "Black Americans in Congress" be revised so that the history and insight of the political process and the roles that black elected officials have played will have a permanent place in America's political memory and future.

IN RECOGNITION OF THE WINNERS
OF THE ELENA MEDEROS
AWARD AND THE OUTSTANDING
ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

HON. ROBERT MENENDEZ

OF NEW JERSEY

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2001

Mr. MENENDEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Judge Lilia A. Muñoz, Claudia L. Moreno, and Julia Valdivia, winners of the Elena Mederos Award, and Sandy Acosta, winner of the Outstanding Achievement Award. On March 25, 2001, the National Association of Cuban-American Women will honor these outstanding women for their great contributions to the Hispanic Community.

Sponsored by the National Association of Cuban-American Women, the Elena Mederos Award was instituted in memory of Dr. Elena Mederos (1900–81), who is considered the most prominent Cuban woman of the Twentieth Century.

Born in Cuba, Judge Lilia L. Muñoz is currently the Chief Municipal Court Judge in Union City, New Jersey, and has made history in becoming the first Hispanic woman to serve in that capacity. She was also the first Hispanic President of the Hudson County Bar Association. Judge Muñoz served as the municipal prosecutor for the Town of West New York from 1997 to 2000, and also served there as the prosecutor for the Alcohol Beverage Control Board. She currently serves on the Character Committee for the Board of Bar Examiners and as a Trustee for the Hudson County Legal Services Corporation.

Professor Claudia L. Moreno is a resident of Weehawken, New Jersey. She is currently an Assistant Professor at Columbia University School of Social Work. Professor Moreno serves as a Grant Reviewer for the Administration for Children, Youth and Families under the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Discretionary Grants Program. She is also a consultant with the Parent's Support Group of the New Center For Outreach and Services for the Autism Community.

Born in Cuba, Julia Valdivia earned a Master's Degree in Education from the University

of La Havana. In 1974, Union City hired Ms. Valdivia to perform outreach to the growing Hispanic community. While serving the Hispanic community, she focused on immigrants new to Hudson County and provided them with essential information regarding housing, employment, education, and business opportunities. She has served the last four Mayors of Union City, and has become one of the most powerful community activists in the city. Ms. Valdivia helped found the Alliance Civic Association, which helps Hispanic community leaders attain public office. In this past election, she was the only Hispanic in the State of New Jersey selected to be a delegate to the Electoral College.

Ms. Acosta is completing a Master's Degree in International Affairs concentrating on International Politics at American University. In 1998, she earned a Bachelor's Degree in International Relations from Florida International University. She currently serves as the assistant to the Executive Director of the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights in Washington, D.C. Ms. Acosta has served as an intern with Senator BOB GRAHAM and at Freedom House and the Center for a Free Cuba.

Today, I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing these four outstanding women for their great contributions to the Hispanic Community.

A TRIBUTE TO AACI

HON. ZOE LOFGREN

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2001

Ms. LOFGREN. Mr. Speaker, I rise to congratulate Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI), which is celebrating 28 years of service to the people of Santa Clara County. Asian Americans for Community Involvement is the largest nonprofit advocacy, education, health and human service organization committed to the welfare of Asian Pacific Islander Americans in Santa Clara County.

The 28th Anniversary Celebration Banquet will help the organization celebrate its years of service to the Asian Pacific Islander community. The Community Star Award will be presented to selected individuals whose dedication and hard work have enhanced the quality of life for Asian Americans. The proceeds from the banquet will allow Asian Americans for Community Involvement to continue their community, health and human service projects in the Asian Pacific Islander communities in Santa Clara County.

Asian Americans for Community Involvement provides an ever-growing number of services for people who have come to rely on this organization for help. Among the health and social services AACI provides are mental health services, substance abuse prevention and treatment and employment training, and programs to combat child abuse, domestic violence, HIV/AIDS, and youth gang involvement.

I am grateful to Asian Americans for Community Involvement for the organization's dedicated service in Santa Clara County, and wish to congratulate each of the 2001 AACI Community Star recipients.

IN HONOR OF STEPHEN C.
LEONOUKAKIS

HON. NANCY PELOSI

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, March 22, 2001

Ms. PELOSI. Mr. Speaker, I rise to express the gratitude of the residents of San Francisco for the outstanding service of Stephen C. Leonoudakis as he retires from the Golden Gate Bridge, Highway, and Transportation District Board of Directors. In every debate of the past 38 years involving the Golden Gate Bridge and transportation between Marin and San Francisco Counties, Steve has been an unfailing advocate for public transit and safety. We owe him an enormous debt of thanks for his visionary leadership and tireless service.

Since his appointment to the Golden Gate Bridge and Highway District in 1962, Steve's continuous tenure on the Board has made him the second-longest serving Director in the District's history. He served as the President of the Board of Directors from 1973–1974.

When Steve joined the Bridge District, traffic on the Bridge had reached unmanageable levels. Unattractive traffic control arches were being designed to deal with the increase in vehicles, additional bridges between San Francisco and Marin Counties were being considered, and adding a second deck to the Bridge was proposed.

Steve offered a competing vision of what the Bridge District should be. Instead of moving cars, Steve was concerned with moving people. Because of his leadership, the law creating the District was amended to give the District the authority to develop a public transit system for the Golden Gate Corridor. Steve has since shepherded a comprehensive plan to decrease pressure on the Bridge that has included the revival of ferry service, a dramatic expansion of bus service, and may one day include rail service along the Corridor.

Steve has been remarkably successful. The bus and ferry system has held bridge traffic to manageable levels without altering the breathtaking beauty of the Golden Gate Bridge on the San Francisco Bay. We will be further grateful for his plan long after his retirement when the rail right-of-ways he fought to purchase are needed to build a rail system for future transit relief along the Golden Gate Corridor. In recognition of these efforts, the American Public Transit Association presented him with its Local Distinguished Service Award in 1996.

Steve has also worked consistently to increase the safety of the Bridge. During the 1970's and 1980's, he was a leader in the maintenance program that significantly upgraded portions of the Bridge including the rivets, suspender ropes, deck, and sidewalk. In the 1990's, he helped oversee the campaign to seismic retrofit the Bridge including finding the funding for this enormous project.

Steve has given his boundless energy and talent to serving the people of the San Francisco Bay Area. He has provided far-sighted leadership and dedicated service in an area where it was greatly needed. It is my honor to thank Steve on behalf of all the people who benefit daily from his vision. I wish him and his wife Rosemary all the best.